



STATE SENATOR SCOTT SCHNEIDER

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SEN. SCHNEIDER: BILLS I SUPPORTED THIS SESSION

✓ **Independent Research:** In an effort to make the legislative branch less dependent on lobbyists for research on public policy topics, Senate Enrolled Act 84 allows lawmakers and the non-partisan Legislative Services Agency to access state-funded research resources at Indiana colleges and universities. Feasibility of establishing a research and policy development division will also be explored.

✓ **School Funding Flexibility:** House Enrolled Act 1367 provides schools the flexibility to claim money normally dedicated to capital projects and use it for instructional purposes. Schools agreeing to pay freezes for staff would be allowed to transfer more money. This measure will provide nearly \$82 million statewide to prevent school employee layoffs and help preserve instructional programs.



✓ **Voting Accessibility:** House Enrolled Act 1109 makes voting easier for those with disabilities and military personnel serving our country overseas. The new law ensures disabled voters have the same access to private, independent voting methods when casting ballots early or absentee as they do when voting on Election Day. It also provides online and fax options for military personnel to cast a vote when serving overseas.



✓ **Redistricting:** Senate Bill 80, which failed to receive a hearing in the House of Representatives, would have required lawmakers to consider preserving traditional neighborhoods and local communities of interests, protecting minority voting rights, creating simply shaped and compact districts and respecting county and precinct lines when drawing future legislative districts. In an effort to continue the discussion, lawmakers approved a resolution calling for a summer study committee on redistricting.



SEN. SCOTT SCHNEIDER

SERVING SENATE DISTRICT 30 TAXPAYERS



PROPERTY TAX CAP AMENDMENT PASSES SENATE, HOUSE

Indiana voters in November's general election will decide if tax limits will be added to state Constitution – once and for all

Hoosier voters in November's general election will determine if permanent caps on property tax rates will be added to the Indiana Constitution.

Members of the Indiana Senate and House of Representatives this session have given final passage to a resolution that would constitutionally cap property tax rates at 1 percent for owner-occupied homes, 2 percent for other residential and agricultural properties and 3 percent for businesses.

This historic tax reform effort sets the stage to add the 1-2-3 caps to Indiana's Constitution. In order to change the state constitution, an amendment must be passed by two separately-elected sessions of the Indiana General Assembly and then approved by voters.

Immediately after a property tax crisis that sent tax bills skyrocketing and hordes of homeowners to the Statehouse demanding reforms, senators and House members in 2008 passed the

phased-in property tax caps into law and started the constitutional amendment process. The Republican-led Senate kept momentum for the amendment by passing it again in 2009, but the caps did not receive a vote last year in the Democrat-controlled House.

During the floor debate, I urged my fellow lawmakers to support the caps because our district was one of the hardest hit by property tax increases, and I believe all Hoosier taxpayers need guarantees that the tax spikes in 2003 and 2007 will never happen again.

This year's action by both the Senate and House proves lawmakers are once again siding with taxpayers and not tax spenders – keeping the promise of permanent property tax relief and reform.

Because lawmakers successfully passed the amendment through both chambers, Hoosier voters will have the final say on Nov. 2.

ETHICS REFORMS

Lawmakers proactively passed a comprehensive ethics reform package aimed at improving transparency in government and providing greater accountability over state leaders.

House Enrolled Act 1001 creates a one-year cooling off period before a retired legislator could become a lobbyist and requires uniform reporting by all lobbyists. The measure further reduces the threshold for reported one-time lobbyist expenses from \$100 to \$50 a day and drops the annual total from \$500 to

\$250.

Reforms include expanding registration and reporting requirements for legislative liaisons of state agencies and universities. The law prohibits statewide officeholders, other than the governor, from appearing or using their name in advertisements funded with state-appropriated dollars, unless approved by a budgetary oversight committee. Also, statewide officeholders and statewide candidates are barred from campaign fundraising during budget-writing sessions.

JOBS & ECONOMY

With little time and no money, lawmakers worked this session to maintain Indiana's pro-job climate of low taxes and limited regulation.

Senators successfully pushed the delay of \$400 million in new unemployment insurance premiums in 2010. Avoiding these increases should help employers retain or add workers.

Lawmakers also passed initiatives to help Hoosiers recover from the national recession:

- **New Employer Tax Credits** for businesses relocating or incorporating here

and hiring more than 10 full-time employees, not including owners.

- **Small Business Tax Credits** expanded to employers with fewer than 35 workers.

- **Small Business Ombudsman** to advocate with state agencies, navigate regulations, streamline paperwork and monitor burdensome red tape.

- **H.I.R.E.** (Helping Indiana Re-start Employment) initiative to offer tax incentives to employers who hire and train unemployed and underemployed Hoosiers.